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A brief history of
Canadian labour

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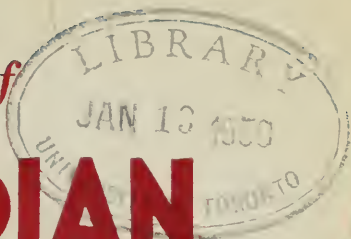
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brief history of

CANADIAN LABOUR

JEFFORD A. SCOTTON



(This booklet is a reprint of 1956, in which edition there appeared the following foreword.)

This booklet is intended to give a brief outline of the history of the Labour Movement in Canada. Limitation of space prohibits the inclusion of many interesting details of the growth of organized labour during the last 100 years or so but the main events of this period have been mentioned. No attempt has been made to analyze the effect of all Labour's actions from its early beginnings until the present, but the gradual development towards the goal of 'one united house of Labour' can be clearly noted.

The author would like to thank Leslie Wismer, Legislative Director of the Canadian Labour Congress and former Public Relations and Research Director of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada, Andy Andras, Assistant Research Director of the CLC and former Assistant Research Director of the Canadian Congress of Labour, and Jack Williams, Public Relations Director of the CLC and former CCL Director of Public Relations, for their assistance in checking the material in this booklet.

We would also like to thank M. Claude Jodoin, President of the CLC and former President of the TLC, Mr. A. R. Mosher, Honorary President of the CLC and former President of the CCL, and M. Gérard Picard, President of the Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labour, for their kindness in writing a brief introduction to this history.

Ottawa, 1956.

a brief history of

CANADIAN LABOUR

Clifford A. Scotton

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**CLAUDE JODOIN, President,
The Canadian Labour Congress**

It is a pleasure to see a Canadian journalist taking an interest in the Canadian Labour Movement beyond the usual reporting of industrial disputes, and, perhaps, some problems which may arise from time to time and come to light within the Movement itself. Mr. Scotton is to be commended for his efforts in providing an objective treatment in this booklet of the highlights of Canadian Labour history.

Mr. Scotton has chosen to complete his investigations into the background of the various sections of the Labour Movement on the eve of the merger of our two national Congresses: The Trades and Labor Congress of Canada and the Canadian Congress of Labour. Perhaps this event has created more interest in the historical records of the two Congresses and other sections of the Movement than any other single incident.

It is a good thing to be conscious of the past and the achievements of those who have preceded us, for in the new Canadian Labour Congress we shall not just be starting out on a new quest for improvements in the working and social lives of our affiliated members and all Canadians, but we shall be doing so with the full realization of the experience and achievements of the two Congresses in the past.

I hope that many within our affiliated ranks and outside of them will read this booklet and become more familiar with Labour's history.

Mr. Scotton's brief history of Canadian Labour has great value, both as a reference work and as an introduction to the background of the Canadian Labour movement. All too little has been written about the history of union organization in Canada; now, as we enter a new phase, it is appropriate that union members, and all those interested in Labour, should be cognizant of the struggle and sacrifice that went into the founding of a sound Labour organization in this country.

I hope that this brief history will help to serve that purpose and will awaken a desire for a longer and more complete history. There is certainly a great need for such a work and we are appreciative to Mr. Scotton for the contribution he has made.



A. R. MOSHER,
Honorary President,
The Canadian Labour
Congress

GERARD PICARD,
President, Canadian
and Catholic Confed-
eration of Labour



I do not hesitate to recommend the "Brief History of Canadian Labour" to every trade unionist who desires to have on hand an accurate summary of all the important facts of the life of the Canadian trade union movement from the early beginnings to the present year, 1956.

Heartly congratulations to have succeeded in so concise a way to give the facts, the dates and the various influences that show how the Canadian labour movement has been built, and how, in 1956, the spirit of unity and co-operation has led to the realization of a great dream: the Canadian Labour Congress.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CANADIAN LABOUR

EARLY BEGINNINGS

THE ORIGINS

Canada's labour movement is distinctly Canadian in the way that most of her institutions are Canadian — they have something of the old world in their makeup and something of the new. The influx of immigrants from the old countries of Europe who introduced the idea of workers' solidarity to their new homeland, and the experiences of organization in the awakening industrial giant to the south, were both powerful forces in building the great Canadian labour movement we know today.

LOCAL SOCIETIES SPRING UP

Numerous local work societies which sought to improve working and living conditions of their members sprang up in the early years of the 19th century despite a British statute of 1800, affecting Canada, which prohibited combinations of workers.

PRINTERS FIRST

Printers appear to have founded the first Canadian trade societies. There are records indicating the existence of printers' societies in Quebec in 1827, in Toronto in 1834 and in Nova Scotia three years later. In the years following, shoemakers, masons, bricklayers, machinists, stone cutters, iron moulders, shipwrights and tailors also formed local unions. Much assistance in building up these organizations was gained from unions already active in the United States.

UNIONS HAMSTRUNG

These local unions attempted to influence their conditions of employment, but the law of criminal conspiracy in restraint of trade,

combined with the hostility of the employers, made their efforts of little significance.

U. S. & BRITISH LINKS

After the middle of the century a number of the union organizations began to affiliate with their opposite numbers in the United States. There were also locals of the English carpenters and engineers societies established in Canada. Some of these latter groups continued their existence into the present century.

FIRST U.S. AFFILIATION

The first group to affiliate formally with a U.S. union was the moulders. They joined the Iron Moulders Union of America in 1859. An historically interesting affiliation was that of the Canadian printers in St. John who, in 1865, joined the National Typographical Union—later to become the I.T.U. They were followed later in the 1860's by printers' locals in Toronto, Ottawa and other towns. The activities of these printer groups eventually led to the birth of the Canadian trade union movement as a whole.

RAILWAY WORKERS ORGANIZE

With the rapid expansion of the Canadian railway system, employees of the rail companies began to organize. In 1863, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers was formed and five years later the conductors formed their own locals in Canada. Railway firemen established their union in 1873 and the first lodge of trainmen was organized at Moncton, N.B., in 1885. Their rapid and almost complete unionization within a limited jurisdiction won relatively good pay and working conditions very early in their existence. This did much to build the solidarity of the rail unions and to establish their reputation as the "aristocrats" of the labour movement in Canada.

KNIGHTS OF ST. CRISPIN

Around this period, also, the Knights of St. Crispin—organized by U.S. shoemakers opposing the use of new machinery for replacing

their craft workshops—began recruiting Canadian members. The Knights were organized in 1867, yet only five years later they had 400 lodges and became the largest American union before 1875. Changing industrial conditions, lack of markets and failure of the leadership when faced with these circumstances, resulted in the early collapse of the Knights of St. Crispin.

STIMULUS FROM THE U. S.

Throughout the years following the middle of the century, international union connections reaching into Canada helped stimulate the growth of a Canadian trade union movement. The economic geography of Canada made it inevitable that labour ties would develop more strongly in a north-south (across the international border), rather than in an east-west direction.

TRADES COUNCILS BORN

Up to this time, however, there had been little co-operation for joint action among the individual union groups within Canada. It was not until 1871 that the Toronto coopers' union approached 14 other labour groups with the suggestion that a Toronto Trades' Assembly be formed. The following year a number of leagues seeking a nine-hour working day were organized and from these the Ottawa and Hamilton Trades and Labour Councils were born. It was these groups that led to the foundation of the labour congresses we know today.

THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE

The Canadian labour movement has, over the years, had to fight every inch of the way for legislation designed to foster the welfare of the nation's workers. Few governments—either provincial or federal—have taken the initiative in approving progressive labour

legislation. Thus, it took tremendous public outcry to win for workers the simple right of organization into groups of their own choice.

UNIONS & CRIMINAL CONSPIRACY

The law of criminal conspiracy in restraint of trade, that had applied to trade unions, was repealed by the United Kingdom Trade Union and the Criminal Law Amendment Acts of 1871. The law of Canada, however, remained unchanged. Thus, any action by a Canadian union group at this time to enforce its demands for improved working conditions was still a criminal offence.

10,000 TORONTONIANS PROTEST

In 1872 when printers in Toronto and other cities struck for a nine-hour working day, 24 of their leaders were arrested on charges of criminal conspiracy. The labour movement immediately set up a tremendous outcry for the repeal of the archaic anti-union law. The Toronto Trades Assembly organized a public meeting attended by 10,000 Torontonians who protested the arrest of the printers. This and other demonstrations, allied with political manoeuvrings of Sir John A. MacDonald and the Liberal editor of the *Toronto Globe*, George Brown, led to the law of Canada being amended the same year to conform with the changes that had been made in Britain in 1871.

FIRST CENTRAL UNION BODY

The barriers that the law of the land could place in the way of trade union growth convinced many union leaders of this era that labour groups must be organized on a Dominion-wide and province-wide basis in order to influence law-making on those two levels. Accordingly, the leaders of the Toronto Trades Assembly invited other unions to form with it a central labour body. The Canadian Labour Union was formed and held annual meetings from 1873-77, (the latter year as the Canadian Labour Union Congress) attended by delegates from 30 local unions in eight Ontario towns.

O'DONOGHUE FIRST LABOUR MLA

It is interesting to note that Daniel O'Donoghue, an Irish immigrant printer from Ottawa and first vice-president of the Canadian Labour Union, was elected to the Ontario Legislature in the year after the founding of the CLU. O'Donoghue, later to become known as "The Father of the Canadian Labour Movement", was the first labour member of any Canadian parliament or legislature. As head of an Ottawa Trades Council delegation, he had earlier led the labour group to a meeting with Prime Minister Sir John A. MacDonald. Thus the pattern had already been set for labour pressure on legislators in the interests of workers.

DEPRESSION HITS

During the late 1870's a business depression hit Canada. This resulted in a sharp decline in union activity and the end of the CLU and the Toronto Trades Assembly. However, these organizations had shown their worth in influencing both Provincial and Dominion legislation affecting labour. During the 1870's there were three Ontario and three Dominion elections—at such times the old politicians were more approachable.

TWO NEW GROUPS

In the years following the depression, two important labour groups became established. These were the Provincial Workmen's Association of Nova Scotia and the Knights of Labor. The two had very little in common and were later to clash on the issue of raiding.

NOVA SCOTIA MINERS ORGANIZE PWA

The Provincial Workmen's Association was formed in 1879 during a mine strike at Springhill, N.S., against a proposed wage-cut. Eventually every colliery in Nova Scotia was organized by the

Association. Attention was then turned to the organization of other groups and soon unions of shoe, garment, steel, railway workers, longshoremen and clerks were chartered by the PWA. The Association prospered and built up a membership of more than 8,000 by the turn of the century despite inroads in membership made by the Knights of Labor between 1879 and 1900. The beginning of the end for the Nova Scotia PWA came with the organizing activities of the United Mineworkers of America in 1907 which led to internal disputes among PWA members. In 1917 the two groups decided to merge and form the Amalgamated Mineworkers of Nova Scotia—two years later this body became District 26, UMWA.

SHORT-LIVED KNIGHTS OF LABOR

Probably the first country-wide group to advocate industrial unionism—as opposed to craft unionism—was the Knights of Labor. It was founded in Philadelphia in 1869 and was a semi-secret society composed originally of garment cutters from that city. The Knights employed elaborate ritual in their union ceremonies and this, at one time, led them to clash with the Roman Catholic church.

THE KNIGHTS MUSHROOM

As its activities extended into many different trades, the growth of the Knights was remarkable. Membership climbed from 50,000 to 700,000 in the years between 1883 and 1886. Peak membership in Canada was reached in 1888 when the Knights had seven district assemblies in this country with a total of 250 locals.

LEADERS OPPOSE STRIKE WEAPON

The confused attitude of the Knights towards strikes is generally believed to have been a major reason for its decline. Many of the most important leaders were against the use of the strike weapon and often alienated the membership by their inept handling of strike situations.

THE DEATH KNELL

Although many Canadian unionists held membership in both the Knights of Labor and the Trades and Labor Congress, the strength of the Knights gradually waned. The death knell for the organization in Canada was sounded when the TLC convention in 1902 voted to ban the Knights of Labor from affiliation on the issue of dual unionism or contravention of the constitutional provision that no two unions operating within the same jurisdiction were eligible for affiliation with the Congress.



THE TRADES AND LABOR CONGRESS OF CANADA

TLC FOUNDED

Following the success that the old Toronto Trades Assembly and the Canadian Labour Union had achieved in influencing legislation, the upswing in business of the early 1880's led to renewed demands for a central labour body. In 1883 the reformed Toronto Trades and Labour Council called a meeting of 21 unions to establish a national labour congress but the 47 delegates (all from Ontario) meeting as the Canadian Labour Congress Convention, adjourned without making any final decision. However, a conference in Toronto, called three years later by the Toronto Trades and Labour Council, resulted in the establishment of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada.

ONE-HALF OF ORGANIZED WORKERS

From that year, 1886, onward, the TLC has met regularly in annual convention. As the new century dawned, the TLC could claim affiliation of well over one-half of Canada's 15,000 active trade unionists.

BECOMES NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

With the passage of years, the influence of the new labour body began to grow. It was not, however, until 1889 that the TLC could

claim to be anything more than a sectional organization. The Congress convention of that year, held in Montreal, drew together a wide cross-section of Canadian labour for the first time.

WINNIPEG 'PLATFORM OF PRINCIPLES'

The influence that labour has had in the legislative affairs of Canada dates from around this period. The TLC Winnipeg convention in 1898 drew up a Platform of Principles which included many proposals considered quite radical at the time—indeed many may still be considered to represent advanced thinking even 60 years later. These principles included: free compulsory education; government inspection of industry; a minimum wage; public ownership of railways, telegraphs, waterworks, lighting, etc.; abolition of the Senate; abolition of child labour; abolition of property qualifications for public offices; and compulsory arbitration of labour disputes. This later point meant, at the time, some form of compulsion on employers to bargain collectively with their workers.

FACTORIES ACT WON

Meanwhile there had been pressure from labour on the different levels of government to ease conditions of work. As early as 1884 the TLC had been instrumental in obtaining passage of the Ontario Factories' Act. This Act forbade the employment of juveniles; provided for factory inspection; laid down better standards of sanitation and other conditions; and restricted hours of work and types of employment for women.

LABOUR DAY ESTABLISHED

During the next few years a demand for some specific labour holiday grew and there were demonstrations in favour of the establishment of a Labour Day. The 1893 TLC convention at Montreal instructed the executive of the Congress to seek the establishment of the first Monday in September as a national statutory holiday each year. The following year Labour Day was officially declared a holiday.

FEDERAL ACTION

The TLC was also continually pressing for federal government boards of conciliation and arbitration and other legislative measures. Much of the work the Congress did at this time eventually led to the passing of the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act in 1907.

DUAL UNIONISM

The issue of dual unionism, of some workers in both the Knights of Labor and the TLC, created one of the first major divisions in the Canadian labour movement. With the expulsion of the Knights of Labor and certain 'national' unions from the TLC in 1902, the Congress became a central organization consisting primarily of the international craft unions in this country. From that time until the present day, the bulk of TLC membership has been made up of these organizations.

OBU SPRINGS FROM CONFLICT

The issue of craft or horizontal unionism versus the vertical or industrial unionism (horizontal, meaning organization across a trade or craft regardless of the industry; and vertical, meaning organization down a complete industry regardless of craft) once more became a major issue in 1919, leading in large part to the establishment of the One Big Union. The OBU breakaway, which included B.C. metal miners, Alberta coal miners and a few Ontario industrial workers, left the TLC in a somewhat weakened position. In common with the Canadian labour movement as a whole, the over-all membership of the Congress declined steadily during the period of the 1920's. There was no substantial increase in membership from this time until the start of World War II.

STEEL AND AUTO ORGANIZED

As industrialization increased during the 1930's, the TLC unions widened their recruiting fields. Particularly significant were the large numbers of workers in the steel and auto industries who were organized at this time.

C I O E S T A B L I S H E D

This influx of industrial unionists had led to a dispute within the TLC as it had within the American Federation of Labor, with which the TLC had retained fraternal relations since 1898. The Committee for Industrial Organization was formed within the AF of L in November 1935, to organize workers in mass production industries. It included mine workers, garment workers, oil workers and textile workers, and was supported by the printers' and hatters' unions. The formation of this organization led to the charge by the AFL executive council that the unions concerned were encouraging dual unionism. After a dispute in 1936 over methods of organizing steelworkers, the CIO unions were suspended from the AF of L. A new organization of the CIO unions—mineworkers, flat glass, auto, rubber and steel—was then established.

E X P U L S I O N O F C I O U N I O N S

In Canada, the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees had been expelled from the TLC on the issue of dual unionism in 1921. Although there were some instances in which it was felt that dual unionism had existed within the Congress during the intervening years, a situation which became more apparent after the formation of the CIO, no action was taken. In 1939, however, the CIO unions, at that time comprising more than 20,000 members, were expelled from the Congress following pressure for this move from both the AFL executive council and certain TLC-member unions.

T L C E X P E L S C O M M U N I S T S

In common with all other labour groups in Canada, the TLC made tremendous organizational strides during the wartime and post-war years. After the end of World War II the Congress took strong action against any affiliated organizations which were Communist-dominated and on these grounds it expelled the Canadian Seamen's Union in 1949 following a strike which it declared was called "not at the request of its membership but of organizations outside of Canada under the domination and guidance of international Communism". At the same convention the Congress declared that no

known Communist or Communist sympathizer could hold office in the TLC, be a delegate to its conventions, or be appointed to any convention committee. This resolution also recommended that Communists or Communist sympathizers be removed from office in affiliated organizations and expelled from membership.

JOINS ICFTU

In the international field the Congress had an impressive record of co-operation with union organizations in other countries. As long ago as 1920 the TLC became affiliated with the International Federation of Trade Unions. Although it participated in the convention which established the World Federation of Trade Unions, it did not join this organization. The TLC was, however, one of the founding members of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions which was formed in 1949.

DEPARTMENTS ESTABLISHED

To provide better services for its members, the Congress established a number of internal departments in the post-war years. A Director of Public Relations was appointed (1948) and this move was followed by the appointment of Directors of Organization and Education (1953) and Political Research (1954). During 1952 a Permanent Committee on Government Employees, to co-ordinate the efforts of affiliated civil service organizations, and a Union Label Trades Department were established.

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

The membership growth of the TLC was steady from its inception until the 1920's. Following the setback at that time, membership increased at a tremendous rate—particularly in the years from 1940 onwards—and exceeded 600,000 in 1956. This constituted nearly half of all organized workers in Canada.



THE CANADIAN CONGRESS OF LABOUR

LEGACY FROM KNIGHTS OF LABOR

Although the Canadian Congress of Labour could trace a history—under that name—of only 15 years, its origins go back at least as far as the early part of the present century. Indeed its distinguishing feature of 'industrial' (as opposed to 'craft') organization was directly traceable to the issue which resulted in the expulsion of the Knights of Labour from the Trades and Labor Congress in 1902.

NATIONAL TRADES AND LABOR CONGRESS FORMED

When the Knights of Labor and unions of a 'national' character were expelled from the TLC on the issue of dual-unionism they were left without a central body. This was remedied almost immediately by the establishment of the National Trades and Labor Congress which held its first meeting in 1903 at Quebec City. The Knights of Labor provided the dominant influence in the NTLC during its early years, but the dissolution of the Knights allowed the leadership to pass to the purely national organizations.

CHANGE TO CANADIAN FEDERATION OF LABOUR

In 1908 the name of the NTLC was changed to the Canadian Federation of Labour and the organization could boast members in Quebec and the Maritimes as well as a number of locals in Ontario and on the Pacific Coast. A boost to the CFL's membership came when the 5,000-member Provincial Workmen's Association in Nova Scotia decided to affiliate in 1910. This affiliation was, however, discontinued when the PWA went out of existence in 1917 as a result of the PWA merger into the United Mine Workers.

BIRTH OF THE ACCL

The post-World War I period was one of expansion for the CFL as its ranks were swelled by workers from the new industries in Ontario and the western provinces. The Canadian Federation of Labour was able to record a membership in excess of 17,000 during the early 1920's; but its strength was declining when, in 1927, it joined with the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees, the One Big Union and a number of other 'national' unions to form the All-Canadian Congress of Labour.

MOSHER FOUNDING PRESIDENT OF CBRE

The CBRE was one of the most important partners in the group that founded the ACCL. It had been formed at Moncton, N.B. in 1908—its founding president being A. R. Mosher—and had by 1927 grown to be the largest national union in Canada. The Brotherhood, which had the bulk of its membership among clerical and unskilled railway workers and a small group within the running trades, affiliated with the Trades and Labor Congress in 1917. Its TLC affiliation had, however, been of short duration.

TLC EXPELS CBRE

Within the Trades and Labor Congress the CBRE found that it had, in many instances, conflicting jurisdiction with the Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks. This issue of organizational jurisdiction finally led to the expulsion of the CBRE from the Congress in 1921. It had remained independent until the founding of the ACCL in 1927.

GROWTH OF THE ACCL

Throughout the depression years of the 1930's the ACCL made vigorous efforts to organize the large body of workers not eligible for membership in the old craft unions. From an initial membership of 46,000 at the time of its foundation in 1927, the All-Canadian Congress increased its strength to more than 54,000 by 1935. This membership was considerably depleted in the following year when a dis-

pute among ACCL officers led to a breakaway by the One Big Union—at this time having a membership of 24,000—and a number of smaller groups. These unions formed a new Canadian Federation of Labour which has, from that time, steadily diminished in importance and now has ceased to exist as a legitimate labour body. The ACCL, however, was soon to receive a vital shot in the arm.

CCIO ALLIES WITH ACCL

When the Trades and Labor Congress expelled the CIO unions from its ranks in 1939—following similar action by the AFL in the United States three years earlier—the Canadian branches of these 'industrially' organized bodies formed a Canadian Committee for Industrial Organization. As war clouds darkened the world, the CCIO sought an alliance with the ACCL. On January 5, 1940 a provisional committee of the two organizations agreed on the principles of a draft constitution for a merged labour congress.

CCL LAUNCHED SEPT. 1940

This constitution was approved at a Congress convention held in the following September and the Canadian branches of 11 international unions and the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee (later the United Steelworkers) affiliated with the new central labour body. Thus, the Canadian Congress of Labour was born at a time when one of the greatest periods of growth lay immediately ahead of the labour movement.

MEMBERSHIP TREBLES

The CCL was not slow to grasp the tremendous organizational opportunities presented by war-time expansion of industrial production in Canada. Membership nearly tripled during the war years and reached 350,000 by 1946. Membership at the time of the CCL-TLC merger was nearly 400,000.

MILITANT ACTION

Militancy was a characteristic of the CCL unions and this militancy resulted in the rapid building of many of the largest unions in Canada today. The Congress, and certain of its affiliates, gave invaluable assistance in organizing sectors of industry that had previously been without the benefits of unionization. Often this militant action led to considerable friction between CCL unions and their opposite numbers in the TLC, but within recent years there was an ever-increasing measure of co-operation between the two Congresses. As far back as 1950, the Winnipeg convention of the CCL went on record in favour of a joint national council of labour bodies "to formulate common policies in the interests of the workers and the whole legitimate trade union movements." In more recent times, this growing closeness was symbolized by the TLC-CCL 'no-raid' pact of 1954 and the decision of the two Congresses to form a merged organization known as the Canadian Labour Congress.

POST-WAR EXPANSION

As the CCL continued to grow steadily in the post-war years, its interests became increasingly diversified. The Congress departments of Research (established 1942), Public Relations (1946), Political Action (1948), Education (1951), Organization (1953) and International Affairs (1953), expanded their activities to provide better services for CCL affiliates and also to increase the knowledge of members in matters affecting their livelihoods and lives.

BACKS CCF

Particularly significant was the decision of the CCL at its Montreal Convention in 1943 to support the CCF party as "the political arm of labour". In 1945, the Congress submitted a list of its aims for shaping legislation in the best interests of the Canadian worker to every political party. Only the CCF endorsed labour's programme. At every CCL convention since 1943, the Congress' support of the CCF was re-affirmed. In elections and by-elections, both in provincial

and federal politics, the CCL and a number of its affiliated unions have given strong support to the CCF while in the Parliaments and Legislatures of the country, CCF representatives—many of them CCL members—have striven to place the needs of organized labour before the nation. Meanwhile the CCL Political Action Committee was successful in establishing local and regional PACs and co-ordinating their activities.

This alignment of the CCL behind a single political party aroused some controversy, particularly from communists and fellow-travellers, on the one hand, and on the other, from certain trade unionists who supported the Sam Gompers policy of no fixed political ties. This opposition has, however, diminished.

CCL EXPELS COMMUNIST UNIONS

One of the most important post-war moves by the Congress was the expulsion from its ranks of Communist-dominated unions. In 1948 the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers was suspended and the following March was expelled from the CCL. Expulsion of the United Electrical Workers, on the issue of non-payment of affiliation fees, was approved in September 1950 and in April 1951 the International Union of Fur and Leather Workers was ousted. These expulsions resulted in a total decrease of 55,000 CCL members.

INTERNATIONAL ACTION

The Canadian Congress of Labour was especially active in the field of international affairs and strove to build closer ties with workers in other parts of the world. Soon after the war, the CCL became one of the founding members of the World Federation of Trade Unions, but later left when it became evident that this organization was dominated by communist groups. The Congress then took an active part in the establishment of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions in London, England in 1949. The ICFTU today

represents some 54,000,000 workers in nearly 100 countries. In addition to its participation in ICFTU central activities, the CCL was particularly active in the Confederation's regional affairs. Many CCL members participated in these regional activities and, in addition, the Congress won the distinction of giving the greatest per capita financial support to the ICFTU Regional Activities Fund.



THE CANADIAN AND CATHOLIC CONFEDERATION OF LABOR

(Confédération des Travailleurs Catholiques du Canada)

QUEBEC'S UNIQUE LABOUR BODY

* The Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labour (CCCL) occupies a unique position among Canada's labour organizations. Its membership is largely French-speaking, there is a predominance of Roman Catholics in its ranks and it has no international (Canada-U.S.) tie. The special conditions prevailing in the province of Quebec—where practically all its 100,000 members are employed—have helped preserve the individual character of the CCCL. Slowly, however, certain fundamental changes have been taking place in the Confederation.

GROWTH OF ORGANIZATION IN QUEBEC

* When trade union organization began to spread in Canada during the early and middle years of the 1800's, it was natural that settled communities such as Montreal and Quebec City should be centres of such labour organization as then existed. Societies of printers were organized in Quebec in the 1820's and in the following years, organizations of carpenters, iron moulders, shoemakers (in the Knights of St. Crispin) and other groups came into existence.

KNIGHTS OF LABOR CONDEMNED

The Knights of Labor was very successful in organizing Quebec workers until it met opposition from Archbishop Taschereau of Quebec. The cleric's position—later to be backed by Papal condemnation of the Labour organization—was based upon his opposition to the secrecy and ritual used by the Knights. Opposition from the church over a three-year period led to the defection of many Roman Catholic members of the Order. This situation was not remedied until the ban was lifted in 1887 as a result of representations to the Pope by Cardinals Gibbons in the U.S. and Manning in the U.K. At one time, the Knights claimed a membership of 16,000 in the province.

SHOEMAKERS LOCKED OUT

If any one group can claim credit for being the forerunner of the Catholic labour movement in Canada, it is to the shoemakers of Quebec that the honor belongs. They had been one of the most organization-conscious groups of workers in the province during the late 1800's. At one time they had been affiliated with the Knights of St. Crispin and later with the Knights of Labor. In the year 1900 nearly 4,000 shoemakers in Quebec City were 'locked out' by members of a newly-formed manufacturers' association following a strike at one plant. The 22 footwear manufacturers kept their employees idle for seven weeks and then invited them to sign a "yellow dog" or "ironclad" agreement (in which the employee promised to resign from his union) and accept the decisions of an arbitration board composed of employers.

CHURCH STATES POLICY

The resulting impasse ended when Archbishop Begin of Quebec was requested to act as arbitrator in the dispute. Basing his award on the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* of Pope Leo XIII — published in 1891 and declaring the policy of the church on labour and social matters—the Archbishop proclaimed the right of employees to organize; objected to certain aspects of the constitution of three of

the six unions involved (the constitutions were duly amended); and suggested that chaplains be appointed by the church to give moral as well as economic guidance in union affairs. Thus, the first local syndicates—from which, eventually, the CCCL sprang—were born.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL DOCTRINES FOLLOWED

While these groups abided by the social doctrines of the Roman Catholic church, and were composed almost entirely of Catholics, they maintained a position of what has been called 'religious neutrality'.

VIGOROUS CHURCH EFFORTS

Following the re-organization of the Quebec unions under the guidance of Archbishop Begin, the Church made vigorous efforts to establish unions with which it had closer ties. A Catholic newspaper, *L'Action Sociale Catholique*, embarked on a campaign to "implant Catholic unionism among the workers" while various church officials helped pave the way for local organization.

CATHOLIC UNIONS HAVE ADVANTAGE

In 1912 pulp workers of the Saguenay combined to form the *Fédération Ouvrière de Chicoutimi* following the exclusion of honorary (Protestant) members from the pulp workers' union which had been started five years earlier. From this time forward there was an increasing drive by religious authorities to form more and more Catholic labour groups. In many instances there was considerable rivalry between the organizers of international unions and the church officials as new organizational fields were opened up. Because of the nature of their organizations, however, the organizers of the Catholic unions were in a position of advantage. The higher dues of international unions also reacted in favour of the syndicates. Indeed, the syndicates were successful in winning over many Catholic unionists affiliated with other labour bodies and nearly all the Quebec members

of the Canadian Federation of Labour—successor to the National Trades and Labor Congress which had been formed in 1902 from TLC expellees.

SECRETARIAT SET UP

As the number of local syndicates continued to increase, the need for some central organization became increasingly apparent. In 1918 a National Central Trades and Labour Council of 27 syndicates was established in Quebec City and later a secretariat of the district syndicates was set up. This secretariat published a weekly newspaper, *Le Travailleur*—later to become the CCL's *Le Travail*. It also assisted in organization; arranged educational courses; promoted consumer co-operative organizations; and provided members with legal advice and medical care.

CONFEDERATION PLANS APPROVED

Organizations affiliated with the National Central Council met in convention during the next two years at Three Rivers and Chicoutimi and discussed the need for and prospects of a central labour body. At this latter meeting, delegates representing 31,000 unionists approved plans for the establishment of a confederation of Catholic workers.

CCCL LAUNCHED

In September 1921 some 200 delegates representing 89 syndicates throughout the province met in Hull, P.Q., and adopted a constitution—which had received Church approval—setting up the Confédération des Travailleurs Catholiques du Canada (Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labour). The CCCL came formally into being on January 1, 1922.

MEMBERSHIP FLUCTUATES

Throughout the years following, there was considerable fluctuation in the membership of the CCCL. In 1921 it claimed a membership of 45,000 but this total fell drastically during the depression years of the early 1930's. However, increasing industrialization and a

growing tendency to depart from organization on strictly craft or trade lines assisted the expansion of the syndicates. This, allied with the boom in union membership experienced during the war years, brought the CCCL membership bouncing up from the depression-low of 25,000 to about 70,000 at the end of World War II. Membership in the Confederation's 450 locals and 16 federations was more than 100,000 in 1956. This represented well over one-third of all organized workers in Quebec. The CCCL is affiliated with the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions.

NEW PROBLEMS

The merger of Canada's two largest labour congresses has raised numerous problems for the CCCL. Its frequent and vigorously-expressed opposition to what it terms "control by American unions" has presented it with the quandary of staying out of the merged organization and possibly being 'swallowed up', or joining such a merger and eventually losing its special identity.

UNITY OF ACTION

In discussing this problem, M. Gerard Picard, CCCL President, told the 1955 convention in Quebec City that organic unity of the various Canadian labour bodies was not necessary for the future well-being of the labour movement. He stated that unity of action among the various labour groups was possible while each retained its own special characteristics.

AMALGAMATION STUDIED

The CCCL President noted, further, that his organization had not been invited officially by leaders of the Trades and Labor Congress and the Canadian Congress of Labour to participate in merger discussions or arrangements. A 9-man committee of the CCCL was established to study the amalgamation question and report to the 1956 convention of the Confederation. Prior to the 1956 convention, however, the plenary council of the Syndicates met at Quebec City and instructed its labour unity (9-man) committee to "come into contact with the Canadian Congress of Labour and the Trades and

Labor Congress of Canada in order to study possible modalities of CCCL participation in the Canadian Labour Congress, it being understood that the integrity of the CCCL would, in any case, be respected”.

CCCL'S EAST-WEST DIVISION

An interesting sidelight on the differing attitudes of CCCL leaders to the merger question was provided by a Montreal newspaper correspondent who noted that, “with few exceptions”, convention delegates from the Montreal and western Quebec areas favoured a merger while those from Quebec City and eastward to the Lake St. John region opposed the move. If this analysis were correct, it could mean that those syndicate members who had been ‘exposed’ to the operations of the international unions in the Montreal area have become disabused of a feeling, quite prevalent among older CCCL unionists, that international unionism would endanger the language and traditions of French-Canada. The increasing contact between syndicate members and those French-speaking Canadians in international unions has also been influential in bringing about a less rigid attitude towards other labour bodies.

SYNDICATE DROPS ‘‘CATHOLIC’’ FROM TITLE

These points reflect a subtle change which has gradually been taking place among the syndicates in recent years in their attitude toward Catholic unionism. Following the Prevost Commission enquiry into industrial disputes in the Saguenay paper industry in 1943, the CCCL pulp and paper union decided to drop the word “Catholic” from its title. Since that time a number of other syndicates have followed suit.

RELIGIOUS AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION OPPOSED

M. Picard laid much emphasis on the Catholic aspect of the CCCL during his address to the 1955 convention. He stated that while membership of some syndicates was entirely Catholic, because the

employees of the industries concerned were all Catholics, the Confederation accepted members without regard for sex, race, colour, language, religion or national origin. The logical action by the CCCL, under these circumstances, he said, would be to take "a name more appropriate than the present one to better identify our movement". It would appear, then, that the Confederation may follow the example of some of its affiliates and drop the word "Catholic" from its title.

LAYMEN REPLACE CHURCH LEADERS

While this trend need not necessarily indicate any weakening of the ties between the Confederation and the Catholic church, the initiative within the syndicates appears, in recent years, to have been assumed increasingly by lay rather than religious leaders. Nevertheless, the CCCL remains primarily a Canadian Catholic labour movement. Its fears that it would lose this particular religious and national identity was probably the greatest barrier which kept it from joining the Canadian Labour Congress when it was formed in April, 1956.

UNAFFILIATED UNION GROUPS

Apart from the three union congresses and the independent railway brotherhoods, the Canadian labour movement also includes a number of unaffiliated groups. Among these are certain international unions, national, regional and local groups and the civil service employee organizations. Some of these groups are legitimate labour bodies while others are labour organizations in name only. The three unaffiliated groups which consider themselves distinct central labour bodies are the One Big Union, the Canadian Federation of Labour and the National Council of Canadian Labour.

ONE BIG UNION

A WESTERN INDUSTRIAL UNION

One of the most interesting and numerically important of the un-affiliated union groups is the One Big Union. In common with many other labour bodies, the OBU grew mainly out of a division of opinion on the merits and success of organization on an industrial rather than a craft basis. This group, at its formation, included workers from the four western provinces and consisted of unionists affiliated with the Trades and Labor Congress.

VIGOROUS ACTION SOUGHT

The immediate post-World War I period saw an increasing drive among western Canadian unions, particularly those in the Winnipeg and Vancouver areas, for some type of politico-industrial action. Post-war industrial unrest and the growth of the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) tradition heightened this feeling. Workers protested what they considered to be the antagonistic attitude of the government towards labour and also were critical of what was described as the "buying off" of labour officials through the offer of government posts. There was also a strong feeling that a vigorous new organization campaign was necessary and that this campaign should be carried out on an industrial (rather than craft) basis. Industrial organization had proved successful during the war.

CALGARY CONFERENCE OF 1919

A demand was made by a number of Winnipeg and district unions to the TLC convention held at Quebec City in September, 1918 for a membership referendum on the question of reorganizing the labour movement into a "modern and scientific organization by industry instead of craft". This motion was defeated. As a result of the failure of the western unions to win approval for their plan, which would have changed the whole organizational structure of the TLC, the western delegates agreed to meet before the 1919 convention of the Congress to co-ordinate action on matters of interest to the west.

This decision led to the calling of the Western Labour Conference, held at the Calgary Labour Temple in March, 1919, which attracted 237 delegates from the four Western provinces and two delegates from Ontario. From this meeting the One Big Union is generally considered to have been born. However, before the OBU could formally come into being, the famous Winnipeg general strike broke out.

THE WINNIPEG STRIKE

At the beginning of May, 1919, the building trades and the metal trades workers in Winnipeg staged a walkout following lengthy negotiations. The building workers sought a wage increase while the metal workers were demanding the right to bargain collectively. The Winnipeg Trades and Labour Council supported the plea of its two striking affiliates when they called for a general strike. In May, about 30,000 workers walked off the job in support of the original strikers and, with the exception of essential services, the city was paralysed. A rash of strikes in sympathy then broke out right across Canada. Efforts by government officials, civic groups and officers of the railway brotherhoods at mediating the dispute were unsuccessful. Some federal government and civic workers were threatened with dismissal unless they returned to work.

STRIKE LEADERS ARRESTED

In the middle of June the federal government delivered a significant blow to the strike by arresting ten of the Winnipeg strike leaders. It also amended the Immigration Act to allow deportation of some of these men without trial. These factors, combined with the agreement of the metal trade employers to grant their workers collective bargaining rights, brought the strike to an end late in June. The strike leaders were later found guilty of "seditious conspiracy" and sentenced to terms of imprisonment ranging from nine months to two years. A number of these men were later elected to the nation's Legislatures and Parliament.

O B U B O O M S

Despite this initial setback to the OBU, organizational progress of the new body was rapid. The Vancouver, Winnipeg and Victoria Trades and Labour Councils affiliated with it and OBU locals were organized as far afield as Montreal. Among the workers who joined the OBU were coal and metal miners, carpenters, railwaymen, textile workers, teamsters, lumber workers and numerous other groups. Membership was reported to be nearly 50,000 in 1920.

T L C & U M W A W I N B A C K M E M B E R S

The OBU's organizing success resulted in a strong reaction from the older-established labour bodies. The TLC and the United Mine Workers made vigorous and successful efforts to regain membership lost to the new group. The eventual decline of the OBU was signalled when the important Lumber Workers' Industrial Union and the Vancouver TLC left the organization in 1921. OBU membership fluctuated considerably as organization work was carried on in a number of diverse industrial fields, but the OBU never again regained its early strength.

O B U I N A N D O U T O F A C C L & C F L

In 1927 the OBU was one of the groups which formed the All-Canadian Congress of Labour, but it left this organization nine years later over issues involving leadership and became part of the revived Canadian Federation of Labour. This uneasy relationship continued for a few years and was finally terminated in 1940 when the OBU again became independent.

T O D A Y ' S O B U

Today the organization claims to have more than 12,000 members in 33 locals in Winnipeg and nearby centres. These locals consist mainly of deliverymen, civic employees, railway shopmen and street railwaymen.

VOTE TO JOIN CLC

At the beginning of 1956 the unions affiliated with the OBU took part in a referendum on the question of joining the Canadian Labour Congress. There was overwhelming support for joining the merger, but as yet the mechanics of integrating the OBU with the CLC have not been decided upon.

THE CANADIAN FEDERATION OF LABOUR

A SHADOW BODY

The name of the once formidable Canadian Federation of Labour was adopted by the dissident group that left the All-Canadian Congress of Labour in 1936. The original CFL, which was founded in 1908 as a successor to the industrial-type National Trades and Labour Congress, had achieved a total membership of 17,000 in 1923. The CFL today appears to be merely a shadow organization and is not regarded by the legitimate Canadian union movement as a true labour body.

GROUPS BREAKAWAY

The breakaway groups that left the ACCL in 1936 to form the Canadian Federation of Labour included the OBU, the Amalgamated Building Workers and the Electrical Communication Workers of Canada. The CFL lost first the OBU membership in 1940 and two years later the Amalgamated Building Workers.

NOT RECOGNIZED BY LABOUR DEPT.

These major defections from the ranks left the CFL with very little membership. Its most recent recorded claim was for less than 4,000 members in six locals and it has not been included in the annual reports of the Federal Department of Labour since 1950.

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CANADIAN LABOR

DOUBTFUL CLAIM

The National Council of Canadian Labour was formed in September 1948 at Hamilton, Ontario, and claims to be a "national federation of Canadian trade unions". Initial membership of the NCCL was

around 2,000 and is now said by officials to include more than 6,000 members in 44 locals. Many labour officials dismiss the NCCL as 'a union of company unions'.

Its membership, located in the five provinces between Quebec and Alberta, includes workers in steel, rubber, electrical equipment, food, textile, printing and business machine industries as well as office workers.



UNITY IS STRENGTH

NEW CHAPTER OPENS

By giving their approval to plans for the merger of the Trades and Labor Congress and the Canadian Congress of Labour, members of Canada's two largest labour congresses, with a combined membership of 1,000,000, helped open a new chapter in the history of Canadian labour.

INDUSTRIAL-CRAFT DISPUTE WANES

In the post-war years, the basic rift in the labour movement, of organization based on craft as opposed to industrial lines, has gradually become less and less important. There was considerable co-operation between members of the two congresses on all levels, almost from the time when the CIO unions which were expelled from the TLC joined with the All-Canadian Congress of Labour to form the CCL.

WARTIME CO-OPERATION

On the various wartime boards and commissions the numerous and broad common bonds and aims between the two groups led to close co-operation between TLC and CCL officials. Following the war, there were a number of occasions when joint action was undertaken by the two labour bodies in their approaches to governments.

JOINT CAMPAIGNS

On the national level this resulted in TLC-CCL joint campaigns to influence the federal government on such issues as compulsory arbitration, unemployment insurance, price control, unemployment and immigration. This co-operation was not of a really basic nature, however, until the issue of raiding (recruitment of the members of one union by another union) — perhaps one of the most contentious issues concerning affiliates of the two congresses—was faced and a solution sought.

CONVENTIONS DEMAND CO-OPERATION

At the conventions of the TLC and CCL in 1953 there had been demands for closer co-operation between the two labour bodies. Since a similar movement was underway in the United States between the Congress of Industrial Organizations and the American Federation of Labor—with which the two Canadian labour bodies have fraternal ties—this lent added impetus to the suggestions. A committee (to become the TLC-CCL Unity Committee) composed of officers of the TLC and CCL met throughout the early months of 1954 and prepared a 'no-raid' pact similar to one endorsed by the AFL and CIO the previous December. The Canadian agreement, approved by the 69th annual convention of the TLC at Regina in August and the month following by the 14th annual CCL convention in Toronto, stated that "no union affiliated with either Congress shall attempt to organize or to represent employees as to whom an established bargaining relationship exists between their employer and the other Congress."

RAIDING CONDEMNED

Delegates to both conventions stressed that, in the past, raiding had fostered "fears and hostilities between workers and unions which rebound to their disadvantage, weaken them by division and create public ill-will." It was further noted that "time and energy spent in raiding has been largely wasted."

NO-RAID PACT SIGNED

Following the almost unanimous expressions of approval of the pact by the two congress conventions, the senior officers of the

TLC and CCL formally signed the agreement at a ceremony in the Chateau Laurier, Ottawa, in November 1954. The pact covered initially only those 75,000 trade unionists who held membership in the organizations directly chartered by the two congresses. Affiliated unions, comprising the vast bulk of the 1,000,000 combined TLC-CCL membership, did not come within the provisions of the agreement until they ratified the pact individually.

U M P I R E N A M E D

The agreement laid down the machinery to be followed in cases of alleged infractions by unions signing the pact. These included, as a final step, a judgment by an impartial umpire. The parties to the agreement also approved a provision for withdrawal of any employee representation claim if a violation of the pact was proved against them. In March 1955, a top labour arbitrator, H. Carl Goldenberg, O.B.E., Q.C., of Montreal, accepted the post of impartial umpire. During the twelve months following the congress conventions which approved the 'no-raid' pact, the services of Mr. Goldenberg were not once called upon. (By contrast, it may be noted, the umpire of the AFL-CIO 'no-raid' agreement in the United States was requested to render decisions in 10 of the 46 cases of alleged violations handled during the first year of operation of the AFL-CIO pact.)

M A J O R S T E P T O U N I T Y

The formal signing of the TLC-CCL 'no-raid' agreement was hailed by the joint Unity Committee of the two Congresses as "the first and essential step towards the achievement of organic unity between the TLC and the CCL, a goal to which both organizations heartily subscribe." This statement was significant, coming as it did from a committee composed of the Presidents and Secretary-Treasurers of the TLC and CCL and two Vice-Presidents from each congress who were also leaders of some of the largest congress affiliates.

U N I T Y C O M M I T T E E M E E T S

Meetings of the Unity Committee were held regularly throughout the latter part of 1954 and the early months of 1955.

Early in May 1955, the Unity Committee approved plans for the new merged labour body. Forging ahead of their U.S. opposite

numbers who were considering plans for AFL-CIO unity, the committee drew up merger terms and agreed that the new organization be called the Canadian Labour Congress.

TERMS OF UNITY AGREEMENT

Basic principles laid down in the CLC agreement included: equal recognition of craft and industrial unions; equal voice for all TLC and CCL affiliates and for other legitimate labour organizations that subsequently join the CLC; a ban on affiliation of organizations supporting totalitarian philosophies, either Communist or Fascist; adherence to just practices; a ban on discrimination and an educational programme on human rights. In addition, the provisions of the 'no-raid' pact were included in the terms of the merger agreement.

CONVENTIONS APPROVE AGREEMENT

The 70th annual convention of the TLC and the 15th annual convention of the CCL, held in May and October 1955 respectively, both unanimously approved the principle of a merger of the two congresses to form the Canadian Labour Congress. While there may be differences of opinion on detail—such as dues, convention representation, frequency of conventions, etc.—in connection with the new labour body, the conditions of the merger were established upon ratification of the merger agreement. The constitution approved by the merger convention established the policies of the CLC for the first two years of its existence. These policies cannot be changed until the 1958 convention.

LONG, CONTENTIOUS ISSUE RESOLVED

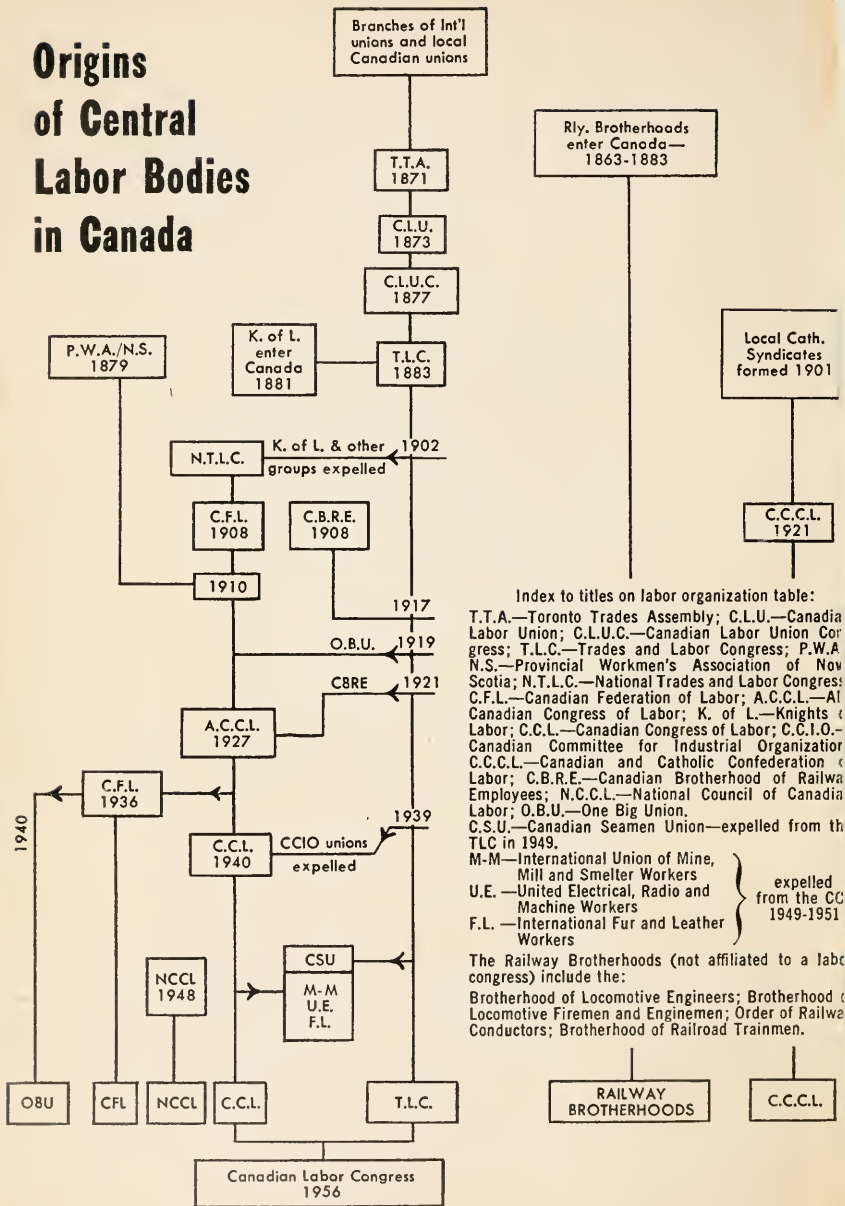
The formation of the Canadian Labour Congress reconciled two points of view which, almost since the establishment of central labour bodies in Canada, had been thought to be irreconcilable. In 1902, the industrially-organized Knights of Labor were expelled from the TLC and the major schism in the labour movement since that time has been based upon the opposition of craft and industrial labour groups. Latterly, the jurisdictional dispute has been a contentious issue within the ranks of organized labour. These problems are well on the way to being solved when the main protagonists in the battle unite.

AIMS AND TASKS OF CLC

The immediate tasks of the Canadian Labour Congress, CLC President Claude Jodoin has stated, will be "to obtain the greatest measure of social and economic security for ourselves and for all Canadians as is humanly possible." CLC Honorary President and President of the Canadian Congress of Labour throughout its 15½-year history, A. R. Mosher, has stressed the contribution that the CLC can make to the international union movement. Mr. Mosher told the final CCL convention in October 1955 that "not only will the establishment of a new merged Congress make our activities in Canada, both in the legislative and organizational fields, much more effective than they have been in the past, but we shall be able to contribute even more generously and effectively to the international labour movement."

If the unprecedented spirit of unity and co-operation that marked the merger negotiations between the two former 'rival' labour bodies is applied to the furtherance of the interests of organized labour through the CLC, the realization of the union dream of 'one united house of labour' in Canada may not be too far away.

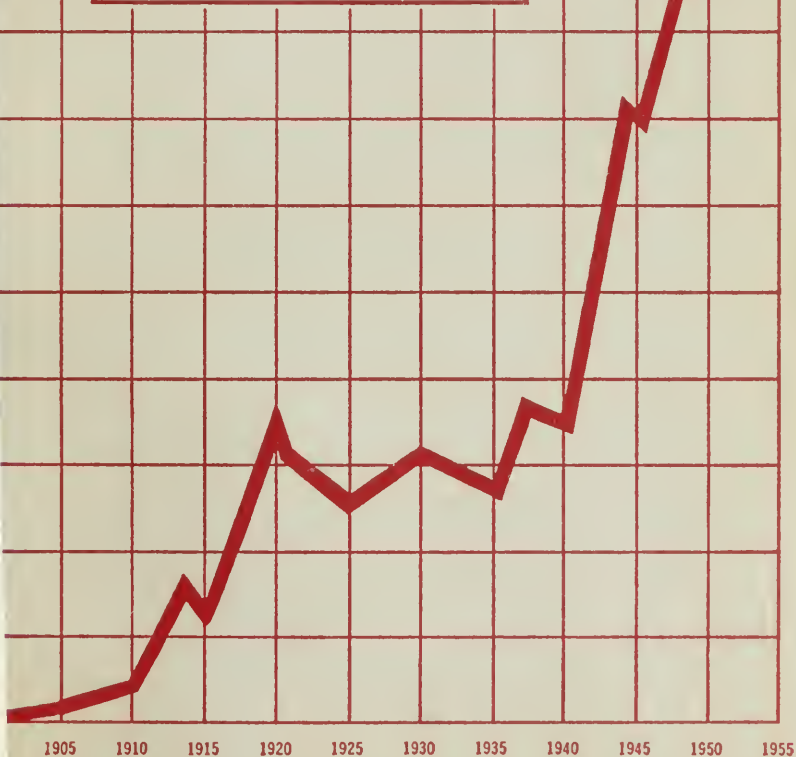
Origins of Central Labor Bodies in Canada



**CANADIAN T. U. MEMBERSHIP
(THOUSANDS)**

Figures for years 1901 to 1910 are
reported membership of the Trades
and Labor Congress *only*.

Source: Labor Organization in Canada.



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